

The  
Elementary English  
Review

J. L. Certain, Editor

---

Volume XVIII  
January-December 1941

---

Subscription Rate—\$2.50 for one year of eight issues

Copyright, 1941, by J. L. Certain

Published at Detroit, Michigan, and Seymour, Indiana

R v.18 1941 c.1.

PUBLISHED

1941

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH

APRIL, MAY, OCTOBER

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER

1941

~~SCHOOLS DEPT.~~

Philosophy  
Religion and  
Education

PUBLIC LIBRARY  
JAN 21 1941  
DETROIT

# The Elementary English Review

---

VOL. XVIII

JANUARY 1941

No. 1

---

~~SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT~~

## Feature Articles

•

- Problems in Primary Book Selection: I. The Selection  
of Pre-Primers ..... GEORGE SPACHE
- Thinking, Writing, Growing ..... BERTHA E. ROBERTS
- The Approach to Creative Expression ..... MABEL F. ALTSTETTER
- Acquisition of a Reading Vocabulary  
MARTHA H. BRADLEY, LORETTA A. CAHILL, and HARRY L. TATE
- Development of a Meaning Vocabulary in the Intermediate  
Grades ..... MARTHA L. ADDY
- Casper Carl Certain (Editorial)
- Recent Books for Children
- Word Group Frequencies: Abstract of a Master's Thesis  
JUSTINE TANDY CAMPBELL
- Program of the Tenth Annual Meeting of THE NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH IN ENGLISH
- 

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

C. C. CERTAIN, *Editor*  
Detroit, Michigan

•

---

\$2.50 a Year

Monthly from October through May

Single Copies 40 Cents

---

# The Elementary English Review

C. C. Certain, *Editor*

VOL. XVIII

JANUARY 1941

No. 1



## The Course of Study in Elementary School English

Reading      Literature  
Book Selection  
School Libraries  
Book Reviews

Composition      Spelling  
Grammar  
Essentials of Speech  
and Writing  
Standard Tests  
Test Procedures and  
Remedial Drills

SUBSCRIPTION RATE  
**\$2.50 for one year  
of eight issues**

Published  
1940

January, February, March  
April, May, October  
November, December

## Table of Contents

Problems in Primary Book Selection: I. The Selection of Pre-Primers .....	5
GEORGE SPACHE	
Thinking, Writing, Growing .....	13
BERTHA E. ROBERTS	
The Approach to Creative Expression .....	17
MABEL F. ALTSTETTER	
Acquisition of a Reading Vocabulary .....	19
MARTHA H. BRADLEY, LORETTA A. CAHILL, and HARRY L. TATE	
Development of a Meaning Vocabulary in the Intermediate Grades .....	22
MARTHA L. ADDY	
Casper Carl Certain (Editorial) .....	27
Recent Books for Children .....	29
Word Group Frequencies: Abstract of a Master's Thesis .....	31
JUSTINE TANDY CAMPBELL	
THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH IN ENGLISH: Program of the Tenth Annual Meeting .....	back covers

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW is published monthly from October to May at Detroit, Michigan. Subscription price \$2.50 per year; single copies 40 cents. Orders for less than a year's subscription will be charged at the single-copy rate. Postage is prepaid on all orders from the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, Panama Canal Zone, Republic of Panama, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands, Guam, Samoan Islands, Virgin Islands and Spain. Postage is charged extra for Canada and for all other countries in the Postal Union as follows: 24 cents on annual subscriptions (total \$2.74), on single copies 3 cents (total 43 cents). Patrons are requested to make all remittances payable to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW in postal or express money orders or bank drafts. Claims for missing numbers should be made within the month following the regular month of publication. The publishers expect to supply missing numbers free only when losses have been sustained in transit and when the reserve stock will permit. All communications should be addressed to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, Box 67, North End Station, Detroit, Michigan. Entered at the Post Office at Seymour, Ind., and at Detroit, Michigan, as second class matter.

Copyright, 1941 by C. C. Certain  
Printed in the U. S. A.

**BOBBS-MERRILL****THE CURRICULUM READERS****FOR PRIMARY GRADES**

By

*Clara Belle Baker, Edna Dean Baker,  
Mary Maud Reed***FOR INTERMEDIATE GRADES**

By

*Clara Belle Baker and Edna Dean Baker  
Editorial Adviser—J. R. McGaughy*

Offering the leading reader series in winning new adoptions—books of this series are used in more than 6000 independent city and county school systems over the country; also have already won the official state adoptions in twelve states. Please write to BOBBS-MERRILL concerning your reader needs.

**OUTSTANDING  
PROFESSIONAL BOOKS****EVERYCHILD AND BOOKS**

By *Jean Betzner and Annie E. Moore*,  
Teachers College, Columbia University.

The culminating point of the whole procedure of reading—the development in childhood of a genuine enjoyment of books and of a finer taste in their selection—receives for the first time in the elementary school field the primary attention it deserves.

Catalog List Price, \$2.13. Net Wholesale School Price, \$1.60, f.o.b. Publisher.

**THEY ALL WANT TO WRITE**By *Four Classroom Teachers*

A professional book by teachers and for teachers. A study of children's growth in written English from first through sixth grade. Should be on the desks of supervisors, administrators, and all elementary school teachers.

Catalog List Price, \$2.54. Net Wholesale School Price, \$1.90, f.o.b. Publisher.

**A WORLD OF STORIES FOR CHILDREN**Edited by *Barrett H. Clark and M. Jagendorf*

A one-volume library, 844 pages, of the great fairy tales, folk tales and legends of the world from the earliest times to the late nineteenth century, for the use of children and teachers, collected with notes, reading lists and bibliographies.

Large easy-to-read type, 6 double-page spreads in color, and jacket in four colors. School Edition—List Price, \$3.47. Net Wholesale School Price, \$2.60, f.o.b. Publisher.

**SCHOOL LIBRARY BOOKS**

We especially invite you to write for the BOBBS-MERRILL school library catalog—sixty pages with colored illustrations and a convenient order form. We specialize in publishing a large number of low-priced *School Editions* of Trade juvenile books ordinarily published only in expensive book-store editions.

**THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY**

730 N. Meridian St. 468 Fourth Ave.  
Indianapolis, Ind. New York, N. Y.

**NEW PUBLICATIONS**

*Helping Children to Read.* By GERTRUDE HIL-DRETH and JOSEPHINE WRIGHT. 96 pp. Cloth \$1.35. Paper 90 cents. A detailed description of procedures in a remedial reading class conducted during a recent summer session at Teachers College, Columbia University: the analysis of each child's problem, the group activities carried on, the individual help given each child, the materials used, the records, and the reports. The facts given here will assist teachers in preventing reading difficulties and in dealing more effectively with children who have reading problems.

*Critical Reading Comprehension in the Intermediate Grades.* By ROMA GANS, PH. D. 135 pp. Cloth \$1.85. Reading comprehension of the type required in reference reading demands the composite ability of understanding the problem under consideration, remembering it while reading, and selecting or rejecting content on the basis of its relevancy and authenticity. This is a study of the reference reading ability of 417 intermediate grade pupils.

*Prevention of Failure in First Grade Reading by Means of Adjusted Instruction.* By HOWARD T. DUNKLIN, PH. D. 111 pp. Cloth \$1.60. This study surveys the literature concerned with primary reading, with a view to developing a tentative program of adjusted instruction which would be practicable in an average schoolroom; tests the program experimentally in order to determine what degree of success would follow its application; and makes the program available for use in further research and in educational practice.

*Units of Work and Centers of Interest in the Organization of the Elementary School Curriculum.* By SADIE GOGGANS, PH. D. 140 pp. Cloth \$1.60. In this study the author critically examines the two antithetical schools of thought in education which influence the organization of the elementary school curriculum. She undertakes to clarify some of the points at issue between the curriculum focused upon organized subject matter and the curriculum primarily concerned with aspects of child living.

**BUREAU OF PUBLICATIONS**

Teachers College, Columbia University

New York City



From *The Iron Doctor*, by Agnes Danforth Hewes.  
Illus. by Herbert Morton Stoops. Houghton Mifflin.

# THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

VOL. XVIII

JANUARY 1941

No. 1

## Problems in Primary Book Selection

### I. The Selection of Pre-Primers\*

GEORGE SPACHE

*Friends' Seminary, New York City, and Brooklyn Friends' School*

DESPITE the considerable amount of research data available, probably the majority of the items usually considered in selecting textbooks is subjective in nature. In the writer's opinion, the judgment of the user influences the results of the application of a score card to textbook selection entirely too much in many instances. As Miss Whipple (24)<sup>1</sup> points out, the major weakness of formalized selection, or the use of score cards, lies in the fact that most cards still permit the opinions and reactions of the scorer to be the deciding factors. No matter how carefully derived, a score card is objective in reverse ratio to the number of items that must be decided by the use of opinion or so-called judgment.

In the score card for the evaluation of pre-primers described herein, the writer has attempted to avoid this situation by providing numerical standards against

<sup>1</sup> Parenthetical numbers refer to items in the Bibliography, page 12.

which a book may be compared. With one or two exceptions, every item of the score card may be applied without recourse to personal reactions. It is apparent, of course, that the use of such standards limits the number of textbook characteristics that may be considered. The criticism has been made that such a card hampers the user in exercising such judgment as he may muster. Despite these limitations, the score card compares favorably in variety of significant items with the composite cards representing nation-wide practices, as described by Miss Whipple (24).

We frankly admit that these standards place too much emphasis on the numerical characteristics of primary books. We are aware that the purpose of primary reading is not to teach words but to create and maintain feeling for reading. But

\* This is the first of a series of articles offering standards for use in the selection of primary books. Subsequent articles will be concerned with the choice of supplementary pre-primers, primers, supplementary primers, first and second readers.

## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

we are faced with the problem of devising standards for primary book selection. It may be possible to allow the problem of motivation and inspiration to rest in the hands of the classroom teacher.

It is appropriate to acknowledge that the writer is indebted in the initial selection of items in the score card to Miss Whipple's (24) splendid survey of current practices in textbook selection. The numerical standards given for each item are similarly derived from a number of research studies. The indebtedness to these various sources is indicated in the description of the derivation of each item. We are deeply indebted to Miss Lillian L. Binns, former principal of the Lower School, Brooklyn Friends School, New York City, for helpful criticism and the suggestion for greater recognition of the significance of interests and learning needs.

It will be noted that values or weights have not been assigned to the various items of the score cards. This step is probably best taken after joint conference of the teachers, supervisor and a reading specialist or consultant. A tentative weighting is achieved by permitting the user to rate a reader as average, above average or below average in value in various items. The writer welcomes criticism and suggestions.

The information necessary to apply these standards to any particular book is usually found in the reader itself or the teacher's manual. If the information is not available from these sources, the user is urged to secure a copy of Hockett's *The Vocabularies and Contents of Elementary School Readers*. This may be obtained from the State Department of Education, Sacramento, California for twenty-five cents.

### SCORE CARD FOR THE SELECTION OF PRE-PRIMERS

	Norm.	Inferior	Average	Superior
<b>I. Content</b>				
<b>A. Vocabulary</b>				
1. Total number of words	842	Below 574	Above 574	
2. Number of different words	69	Above 95	55 to 95	Below 55
3. Average repetition	11	Below 7	8 to 16	Above 16
4. Number of new words per page	1.7	Above 2	1.4 to 2	Below 1.4
5. Per cent of words repeated six times or more each	66	Below 41	41 to 79	Above 79
6. Per cent of primer vocabulary	28	Below 19	19 to 30	Above 30
7. Per cent of standard vocabulary	94	Below 91	91 to 97	Above 97
<b>II. Physical Makeup</b>				
<b>A. Type</b>				
1. Length of line not more than four inches				
2. Size of type not less than 12 point (1/6th inch)				
3. Leading or space between lines 3-4 mm. or 4 point				
<b>B. Paper</b>				
1. Dull, off-white, not highly polished or glossy				
<b>C. Pictures</b>				
1. Occupy approximately 25 per cent of book				
2. Full-color preferable				
3. Red, yellow and blue predominant				
4. Colors having high degree of saturation and brightness				
5. Large, full-page predominant				
6. Bold, central groups, few but striking details				
7. Portraying action, humor and having story-telling qualities				

**D. Cover**

1. Full-color preferable, red, yellow and blue predominant
2. Color with high degree of saturation and brightness
3. Flexible, not too stiff for book to lie open.

**III. Adaptation to Instructional and Learning Needs****A. Provision for enrichment by**

1. Supplementary workbook
2. Charts, flashcards
3. Supplementary pamphlets, picture books, etc.
4. Teacher's manual

**B. Value and Appropriateness of Material**

1. Not classical literature, nursery rhymes or folk tales
2. Stories of children preferable
3. Animal stories and those with elements of surprise, liveliness and humor.
4. Sequence of thought not sacrificed to repetition
5. Related to child's experience
6. Adaptable to classroom activities

**IV. General Organization****A. Harmony with educational aims and course of study****V. Miscellaneous**

- A. Author of classroom experience and reputation.
- B. Moderateness of price

The derivation of each of the standards of the score card is described in the following sections.

**STANDARDS FOR THE SELECTION  
OF PRE-PRIMERS**

Since the difficulty of a reader is determined largely by the characteristics of its vocabulary, a number of standards for evaluating these characteristics is given. The column headings in the score card signify: "Inferior"—the more difficult books; "Average"—the middle half of the books or those of moderate difficulty; "Superior"—the more simple and more desirable books. "Norm" is the average of a number of pre-primers. All other things being equal, pre-primers of greater than average difficulty, or those rated "Inferior" in a number of vocabulary standards are not desirable as beginning books however serviceable they may be later in the first year.

The average pre-primer has 842 running words and 69 different words.

Ninety-four per cent of these are chosen from a standard vocabulary list. These different words are repeated approximately 11 times each, 66 per cent of all the words being repeated more than 6 times each. New words are introduced at the rate of one and one-half per page. Furthermore, the average pre-primer contains 28 per cent of the vocabulary of the subsequent primer.

**I. CONTENT****A. Vocabulary**

1. Total number of words. The average number of running words in the 50 pre-primers and easy primers studied by Hockett (12) was 842. Pre-primers with a greater number of words than 1054 must necessarily sacrifice space for illustrations. Those much smaller than 574 words are apt to be merely picture books with little repetition. According to the standards given here, pre-primers smaller than 574 words or greater than 1054 are rated "Inferior." These books are outside

## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

the range of the middle half of the books counted by Hockett (12). There is no standard for "Superior" books in this item.

2. Number of different words. The average number of different words in the 26 pre-primers of Rudisill (19) was 68. Hockett (12) confirms this with an average of 69 words for 50 books. The middle half of these 50 ranged from 55 to 95 in number of different words. Pre-primers within these limits are rated "Average" in difficulty. Those with less than 55 words are less difficult than the average and "Superior." Those with more than 95 are "Inferior."

3. Average repetition. Dividing the total number of words in a pre-primer by the number of different words, gives the approximate number of times each word is repeated. Of course, some words are repeated more and others less. In Hockett's study (12), the words were repeated 11 times. The middle half of the 50 books ranged from 7.7 to 16.2 in repetition. Repetition within the limits of 8-16 may be considered "Average." Pre-Primers with average repetition below 8 hardly justify the name. They are, practically speaking, picture books.

4. Number of new words per page. Stone's 12 pre-primers (21) introduced new words at the rate of about 1.7 per page. The writer has assembled data for 46 books. The median rate of introduction of new words for these books is 1.7. The middle half range from 1.4 to 2.0. This figure may be found for any book by dividing the number of new or different words by the number of pages of reading material intended for the child. Pre-primers that introduce words at a faster rate than two per page are unnecessarily difficult and should be rated "Inferior" in this characteristic.

5. Per cent of words repeated six times or more each. Although no one knows exactly how many times a word must be repeated to insure mastery,<sup>2</sup> it is known that the more frequent the repetitions the more chance of mastery. Thus a pre-primer may be judged as to its efficiency by determining the number of times each word is presented. Hockett (11) and his workers have done this for 50 pre-primers and easy primers. He indicates that 66.3 per cent of the words in the average book are repeated six times each or more. Rudisill (19) gives almost identical figures.

These data may be used as a standard in the score card. If so, "Average" pre-primers should repeat from 40 to 80 per cent of their different words six times or more each, according to Hockett. The standard is easily applied since the information for most of the commonly used books is given by Hockett (11) or Rudisill (19).

6. Per cent of primer vocabulary. The average pre-primer of the 15 for which Rudisill (19) gives full information contained 17 per cent of the vocabulary of the subsequent primer. The writer's data for 37 books indicate that the average is 28 per cent. The middle half of the books had from 19 to 30 per cent of the primer vocabulary. The explanation of the difference between Rudisill's and the present data lies in the method of counting words.

The number of primer words that may be contained in a pre-primer is, of course, limited by the extent of the vocabulary of the latter. For a pre-primer to use only 28 per cent of the primer words is not too little. If the 69 words of the average pre-primer were repeated in the 275 words

<sup>2</sup> See Gates "*Interest and Ability*," for a guess as to the number of repetitions necessary.

of the average primer, then the percentage of primer words in the average pre-primer would be 25. It appears that the integration between pre-primers and primers of many series is quite close.

Pre-primers which contain more than 30 per cent of the vocabulary of the primer of the same series are "Superior" in the extent to which they prepare for the reading of the primer. Of course, further preparation for the primer is achieved by the reading of supplementary pre-primers but this matter will be discussed in a subsequent article. Pre-primers that contain less than 19 per cent of the primer words certainly give "Inferior" preparation and integration.

7. Per cent of standard vocabulary. Standard vocabularies against which the words of a pre-primer should be checked are those of the spoken vocabulary of children up to and including six years of age (14), the vocabulary of children before entering the first grade (15) or the primary reading lists formulated by count of the words actually used frequently in primary literature, as the lists of Gates (7) or Stone (22).

According to Hockett and Neeley (13) 64 per cent of the words of the average first reader are found in the first 500 words of the Gates list. Eighty-three per cent are found in the first 1000 words of the same list. In all, 92 per cent of the vocabulary of the average first readers is present in the entire Gates list. The writer has assembled data for 43 pre-primers. The average pre-primer of this group used words based on a standard list to the extent of 94.5 per cent. The middle half of the readers contained from 90.8 to 97.8 per cent of a standard list such as those mentioned above. These data are used as a standard for this vocabulary characteristic of pre-primers.

## II. PHYSICAL MAKEUP

### A. Type

1. Length of line. Studies of Gates (8) and Blackhurst (2) indicate that 105 mm. or four inches is most favorable for eye-movements of the primary child. Of course, the lines should not be broken by pictures.

2. Size of type. Type should probably be not less than 12 point or 1/6th of an inch for the first four grades. Although favorable, larger type is probably not necessary for the average child, according to Buckingham (3) and Blackhurst (2). Clear type is equally as important as large type. The greater the contrast between the black of the print and the white of the paper, the stronger the visual impression (23).

3. Leading or space between lines. Leading should be at least 4 point or 1/18th of an inch (15). Blackhurst (2) advises 3.8 mm. or 1/7th of an inch for the first grade.

### B. Paper

1. Paper of dull, off-white is distinctly preferable to the highly polished or glossy white (20).

### C. Pictures

Large, full-color pictures, particularly those in red, yellow or blue are the definite preferences of primary children, according to Bamberger (1) and Miller (16). These pictures should contain a few bold, central groups and little detail unless striking in nature. They should portray action or humor and, if possible, tell a story. They should, of course, be related to the context. Crude, elementary colors with a high degree of saturation and brightness are preferred. Children definitely prefer books with at least 25 per cent of pictures.

#### D. Cover

These same standards with respect to colors apply to the cover. In addition, the cover should not be so stiff that it is difficult for small fingers to keep it open.

### III. ADAPTATION TO INSTRUCTIONAL AND LEARNING NEEDS

#### A. Provision for enrichment

A good reading series enables the teacher to adapt instruction to the needs and ability of the class by providing supplementary materials. Workbooks, pamphlet reading materials, or other pre-primers repeating the vocabulary of the basal pre-primer should be available. Charts and flash cards for word, phrase and sentence drill should be available for those desiring them. A teacher's manual is also desirable.

All other things being equal, the simpler a book is, the better it is, regardless of the intellectual level of the class. Reading failures are almost as common among superior children as they are among average children of the first grade. However, it is generally accepted that average children need more repetition than do superior, and the dull children more than either. Although a book of average difficulty may be desirable for a number of reasons for use with normal or superior children, it is seldom suitable for use with dull children or bright children experiencing any difficulties. The moderate difficulty of the book may be overcome by extensive supplementary reading with average or bright children, but the dull child cannot undertake such extensive reading because of the additional vocabulary involved.

#### B. Value and appropriateness of material

The value and appropriateness of the material may be judged both by the subject matter and the style. The subject

matter should deal with topics familiar to the child, i.e. the city, country, pets, trips, school, family, etc. One of these topics should probably not be stressed to the exclusion of all others unless it is the topic toward which the activities of the class will be directed.

Studies of the reading interests of primary children (4, 5, 9, 10) indicate that surprise, liveliness, animalness, conversation and humor are the most popular stylistic characteristics of primary literature. Classical literature, folk tales, nursery rhymes as well as stories with a moral are definitely not preferred. The stories about children are to be preferred to those about adults, although the former must possess the desirable style characteristics also. Examples of the sacrifice of sequence of thought to the demands of repetition are given by Stone (21, pp. 178-181.)

### IV. GENERAL ORGANIZATION

The organization of the pre-primer should permit the teacher to fulfill the aims of the local course of study as well as recognized educational aims of primary reading. For a good discussion of these latter, see Stone (21) Chapter II, or Marjorie Hardy (11).

There should be an interrelationship between reading about something and doing it. This does not imply that the reader must form the core of the classroom activities. It does imply that the organization of the pre-primer permits and supplements the classroom activities. Several stories in a pre-primer are probably preferable to a single topic since this permits the choice of projects, etc. to remain in the hands of the teacher. If, however, the activity of the classroom is to be centered about a single topic, then a pre-primer devoted to this single topic may be desirable.

## V. MISCELLANEOUS

An author with classroom experience and recognized reputation is preferable to one qualifying only in the latter or one trained only in supervisory work.

Moderateness of price may readily be determined by comparison with other texts of equal pedagogical value. This consideration might well be delayed until the other standards have been applied.

To demonstrate the practical nature of the score card, fourteen pre-primers are evaluated below in terms of vocabulary characteristics. Both numerical data and ratings of "Superior," "Average," etc. are given for each book. For example, the pre-primer, *Playmates* of the "Curriculum Readers" published by Bobbs-Merrill, contains 1217 running words and 66 different words. According to our standards

the book receives a rating of "Average" in both these points. The words of this book are repeated, on the average, 18.4 times and are introduced at the rate of 1.3 per page. In both of these items, the book receives a rating of "Superior."

For those who may wish a summation of the various ratings, the last column at the extreme right provides a sort of summary of the ratings each book has received. If we permit a rating of "Superior" to be worth three points, one of "Average" to be two points and "Inferior," one point, it is possible to add up all the ratings and give a figure representing the total value of the book's vocabulary characteristics. Books with a total value of more than 14 are above average while those below 14 are lacking in desirable vocabulary characteristics.

SCORE CARD FOR THE SELECTION OF PRE-PRIMERS

PRE-PRIMER	VOCABULARY CHARACTERISTICS							Total Value
	1 Total words	2 Differ-ent words	3 Average repetition	4 New words per page	5 Words 6 times each	6 Per cent primer vocabulary	7 Per cent standard vocabulary	
Playmates—Curriculum—Bobbs-Merrill	1217	66	18.4	1.3	86	21	99	18
Let's Play—Children's Bookshelf—Ginn	A	A	S	S	S	A	S	
Frolic and Do-Funny—Children's Own—Ginn	1177	69	17.1	1.5	87	23	95	16
Who Knows—Child Development—Houghton Mifflin	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
Spot—Happy Hour—Johnson	517	46	11.2	1.0	83	18	97	15
The Little Chart—Work-Play—Macmillan	A	A	A	A	A	I	A	
Rides and Slides—Alice and Jerry—Row, Peterson	667	64	10.4	1.6	77	27	98	15
Here and There—Alice and Jerry—Row, Peterson	A	A	A	A	A	A	S	
Dick and Jane—Elson Basic—Scott, Foresman	1187	94	12.6	2.0	70	25	99	15
More Dick and Jane—Elson Basic—Scott, Foresman	A	A	A	A	A	A	S	
Tom's Trip—Unit Activity—Silver Burdett	870	68	12.8	1.7	74	23	95	14
Tom and Jip—Webster—Webster	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
The New Little Book—Child's Own Way—Wheeler	574	36	15.9	1.1	78	13	95	15
Tots and Toys—New Silent—Winston	I	A	I	A	I	I	A	
	560	88	6.4	2.0	34	15	95	10

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bamberger, Florence E., "The Effect of the Physical Make-up of a Book upon Children's Selections," *Johns Hopkins Studies in Education*, 4, 1922.
2. Blackhurst, J. H., *Investigations in the Hygiene of Reading*. Warwick and York, 1927.
3. Buckingham, B. R., "Type Sizes of First-grade Textbooks are Tested for Readability," *Nation's Schools*, 12, September 1933, 45-48.
4. Celestine, Sister M., "A Survey of the Literature on the Reading Interests of Children of the Elementary Grades," Catholic University, *Educational Research Bulletin*, 5, nos. 2-3, February-March 1930.
5. Dowell, P. S. and Garrison, K. C., "A Study of the Reading Interests of Third-grade Subjects," *Peabody Journal of Education*, 8, January 1931, 202-6.
6. Fowlkes, J. G., *Evaluating School Textbooks*. Silver, Burdett, 1923, pp. 34.
7. Gates, Arthur I., *A Reading Vocabulary for the Primary Grades*. Teachers College, Columbia University, 1935.
8. Gates, A. I., "What Do We Know about Optimum Length of Lines in Reading?" *Journal Educational Research*, 23, January 1931, 1-7.
9. Gates, A. I., *Interest and Ability in Reading*. Macmillan, 1931.
10. Gates, A. I., Peardon, C. C. and Sartorius, I. C., "Studies of Children's Interests in Reading," *Elementary School Journal*, 31, May 1931, 656-670.
11. Hardy, Marjorie, *Teacher's Manual for the Hardy Readers*. Wheeler, 1938.
12. Hockett, John A., "The Vocabularies and Contents of Elementary School Readers," State of California, *Department of Education Bulletin* 3, May 1, 1938.
13. Hockett, John A. and Neeley, N. G., "The Vocabularies of Twenty-eight First Readers," *Elementary School Journal*, 37, January 1937, 344-352.
14. Horn, Ernest, "The Commonest Words in the Spoken Vocabulary of Children up to and Including Six Years of Age," 24th Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, *Report of the National Committee on Reading, Part I*. Public School Publishing, 1925, 186-193.
15. Child Study Committee of the International Kindergarten Union, *A Study of the Vocabulary of Children before Entering the First Grade*. International Kindergarten Union, 1928.
16. Miller, Wm. A., "The Picture Choices of Primary-Grade Children," *Elementary School Journal*, 37, December 1936, 273-282.
17. National Society for the Study of Education, 30th Yearbook, Part II, *The Textbook in American Education*. Public School Publishing, 1931.
18. Paterson, Donald and Tinker, Miles A., "Studies of Typographical Factors Influencing Speed of Reading, VIII: Space between Lines or Leading," *Journal Applied Psychology*, 16, August 1932, 338-395.
19. Rudisill, Mabel, "Selection of Pre-Primers and Primers—A Vocabulary Analysis," *Elementary School Journal*, 38, May, June 1938, 683-693, 767-775.
20. Starch, Daniel, *Educational Psychology*. Macmillan, 1929.
21. Stone, Clarence R., *Better Primary Reading*. Webster, 1936.
22. Stone, Clarence R., *A Graded Vocabulary for Primary Grades*. Webster, 1936.
23. Uhl, Willis, *Materials of Reading*. Silver, Burdett, 1924.
24. Whipple, Gertrude, *Procedures Used in Selecting School Books*. University of Chicago Press, 1936.

# Thinking, Writing, Growing\*

BERTHA E. ROBERTS

*Deputy Superintendent in Charge of Elementary Education,  
San Francisco Public Schools*

WHEN A CHILD has the power to write about his experiences, he feels not only the joy of recording and reading these personal happenings, but he ultimately realizes the satisfaction which comes through sharing his experiences with others. The child's whole realm of expression takes on new purpose as the power of speaking and writing grows. Interests widen, thinking broadens, people and doings become more meaningful. In truth, he eventually breaks the barriers of time by acquiring the ability to preserve in permanent form experiences of the past. He also overcomes distances by being able to project his thoughts in writing to far-away places.

Any child's efforts in the field of creative expression should be met with sympathetic understanding, followed by studied guidance and meaningful teaching. It is the task of the teacher to assist each child in reaching his maximum power of expression at each of his developmental levels.

In order to guide teachers in developing the child's power of expression a survey of the voluntary writings of elementary school children was made. Through this survey the answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the outstanding interests of pupils at each successive developmental level?
2. Through what experiences have these interests been developed?
3. With what vocabulary have these interests been expressed and recorded?

4. Can growth be noted through the increased and decreased use of certain basic words?
5. What is the general running written vocabulary at each developmental level?
6. Through which type of experiences could this vocabulary be enriched?
7. What are the spelling needs at each interest level?
8. How can spelling needs be met most adequately?
9. What curricular changes should be brought about through this investigation?

The field of investigation for this study consisted of pupils from seven to fourteen years of age in grades two to eight of twenty-one elementary schools. These schools were selected so as to represent an entire cross-section of San Francisco's cosmopolitan area.

The twenty-one teachers of these representative schools were chosen on the basis of their general acceptability as high average teachers, and their interest and willingness to co-operate in the study which involved attendance at an instructional meeting and the general supervision of their pupils' work in this experiment.

The pupils in the selected schools ranged from the least privileged to the most privileged in our city, and represented many racial backgrounds. A group of 700 unselected pupils from these schools participated. They were unselect-

\*Based on a study of 3500 compositions written by children in grades 2 to 8.

ed insofar as the entire class within each school recorded their creative thoughts, and the work of no pupil from a selected grade was excluded.

At the initial meeting the teacher participants of the twenty-one schools were given the following instructions:

1. Allow each pupil in your class to write freely a composition (letter, story, or poem) on a topic of his own choice. Do not suggest topics or "leads" which might influence the child's free expression.
2. Permit individual pupils to select and use the type of writing materials with which they are most familiar, (pencil, pen; ruled or unruled paper).
3. Assist pupils with spelling, upon request, but require and accept only the first writing of the composition upon which no teacher corrections have been made.
4. Repeat this procedure for five consecutive days so that each pupil will have contributed five separate compositions.

many cases was misleading, but through reading the composition in order to determine the main topic of interest.

After the analysis of the compositions for interest, one hundred unselected compositions from each grade were further analyzed to determine: (1) The vocabulary utilized at each level in terms of range. (2) The vocabulary utilized at each level in terms of frequency. (3) Growth of vocabulary from one level to the next. (4) Growth as shown through decreased frequency in certain words. (5) Growth as shown through increased frequency in certain words. (6) Misspelled words at each level.

#### *Pupil interests*

Table I is an excerpt from a summary of pupils' dominant interests in grades two to eight as indicated by their free written expression. It is based on an analysis of the 3500 compositions contributed by 700 pupils in the seven respective grades. It will be observed that in all grades recreation and play are the dominant interests. The nature of the activities, of course, varies somewhat throughout the grades. This category, too, is unduly influenced by the fact that

TABLE I  
INTEREST IN GRADES TWO TO EIGHT AS INDICATED  
BY PUPILS' FREE, WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Topic	Approx. Age Range	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
	Grade Placement	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	No. Compositions	330	1015	300	520	635	230	470
Recreation and Play		25.8	16.7	14.0	25.2	27.2	12.6	17.9
Pets		22.7	21.0	10.0	12.1	12.1	2.2	.4
Nature		10.9	6.9	12.7	2.7	2.0	16.1	11.1
Holidays		8.9	6.4	1.7	4.4	1.7	1.3	.9
Favorite Books and Stories		5.2	2.0	5.0	2.7	3.3	1.7	8.1
My Community, My City		3.6	5.1	7.0	5.8	6.6	14.8	14.3
Personal Experiences		1.8	2.7	9.7	11.5	18.1	14.3	3.6

The 700 pupil participants contributed 3500 separate compositions covering a wide range of subjects. These compositions were analyzed to discover the pupils' interests at each level. This was accomplished not by taking the title, which in

the compositions were written shortly after the festivities celebrating the completion of the Golden Gate Bridge and many excursions had been planned for the children by both home and school which were classified under recreation.

Interest in pets holds a prominent place in grades two and three, becomes less conspicuous in grades four to seven, and is almost negligible in the eighth grade. Holidays such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, birthdays, are much more important in the lives of seven, eight, and nine-year-olds than in the older children as evidenced by a drop from 8.9 per cent in the second grade to 0.9 in the eighth grade.

Community interest shows a consistent rise from grades two to seven, the percentage of frequencies increasing from 3.6 to 14.8. Personal experiences show a rapid rise in the intermediate grades, decreasing in the eighth.

Interest in home and family and personal possessions reaches its highest point in the third grade, and seems to disappear entirely in the eighth. Among interests which do not manifest themselves until the sixth, seventh and eighth grades are historical events, activities in foreign countries, science, hobbies, newspaper articles, industries, sports, music and art. The majority of children's interests as shown by their compositions fluctuate from grade to grade, being influenced more by school centers of interest in the lower grades than in the higher grades.

#### *Activities through which interests have been developed*

It is only natural that pupils express interest in the activities in which they have participated. This is noted particularly in the recreation and play, home and family, personal experiences, school, and other categories in which the individual himself is the center of interest. There is little question but that bringing life situations into the classroom and widening pupils' range of experiences through excursions has increased the

range of interests. Looking at Table I it may be noted that the active situation greatly exceeds the passive in frequency of mention, that children are more likely to express interest in the things they have done or seen rather than in those about which they have heard or read. The study shows that as the realm of child activity widens the interests follow. This is manifested in an increase in the variety of interests from grades two to eight inclusive.

#### *Vocabulary as a tool of expression*

One hundred unselected compositions at each grade level were used as a basis for determining the vocabulary range used in free, written expression at the respective levels. This was accomplished by recording each word used, together with its frequency for each grade. The frequencies per running 10,000 words were then estimated.

Table II which follows shows the number of different words used by each respective grade.

TABLE II  
NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WORDS USED BY  
EACH RESPECTIVE GRADE  
(Based on One Hundred Unselected Compositions)

Grade	Level	Age Level	Number of Different Words Used
2		7 to 8	441
3		8 to 9	629
4		9 to 10	815
5		10 to 11	950
6		11 to 12	1152
7		12 to 13	1454
8		13 to 14	1440

Since no effort was made to exhaust a pupil's written vocabulary, this investigation does not give the average vocabulary of the individuals at each age or grade level. If, however, in one hundred short compositions contributed by second graders, 441 different words were used, we are justified in assuming that these words would be an adequate basic word list for children of that age and grade. As the

## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

table indicates there is constant and fairly consistent growth from grades two to seven inclusive, the difference between the seventh and eighth grade vocabularies being negligible.

While the cause contributing to lack of vocabulary growth between grades seven and eight is not definitely known, it may be attributed to the nature of the change in teaching procedures. In grades one to six inclusive a conscious effort is made toward improving vocabulary by broadening educational opportunities and widening pupil experiences. In grades seven and eight the pupils' work is less flexible, and in many schools, subjects are departmentalized.

*Word frequencies as a barometer of growth*

In recording word frequencies, the various forms of each verb were not counted as additional words; neither were plurals. The frequencies of all words occurring more than twenty times per 10,000 running words were recorded for each grade. Among words decreasing conspicuously in frequency in grades two to eight are those in Table III which follows.

Word	TABLE III FREQUENCY PER 10,000 RUNNING WORDS (Decreases Shown from Grades Two to Eight)							
	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	
his	51	55	31	39	30	33	23	
the	632	645	521	725	701	648	339	
I	623	614	500	473	411	377	242	
to	345	305	228	277	171	263	164	
my	206	307	182	176	225	119	98	
he	168	192	183	119	104	60	46	
went	164	106	64	129	61	65	32	
like	135	118	36	51	51	33	36	
we	131	67	99	186	182	107	79	
then	114	60	56	36	35	41	28	
on	109	94	124	122	79	89	47	
go(ing)	105	127	99	67	64	61	40	
have	93	84	94	75	74	47	53	
one	93	51	61	64	53	58	47	
day	88	55	51	47	45	60	30	
him	88	65	53	45	33	21	..	
saw	63	84	31	62	22	24	..	

(Continued on page 28)

Word	TABLE IV FREQUENCY PER 10,000 RUNNING WORDS (Increases Shown from Grades Two to Eight)							
	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	
of	88	86	109	135	127	193	144	
with	38	65	54	47	35	49	46	
very	29	34	31	41	61	57	54	
but	25	46	35	51	53	54	62	
that	21	37	40	77	103	85	110	
so	..	22	48	68	89	50	35	
as	..	..	..	41	40	56	53	
from	..	..	23	29	21	31	43	

A survey of the words in Tables III and IV indicates trends which are significant in the growth of a pupil's ability to express himself in writing. It is difficult to determine which words decrease in frequency through an expansion of vocabulary and which decrease through increasing the range of interests. The pronoun "I" for instance, shows a consistent decrease from a frequency of 623 per 10,000 in the second grade to 241 per 10,000 in the eighth grade. This is unquestionably due to the fact that as the child grows his experiences grow less and less and personal. This is further emphasized by the persistent decrease in the use of "my" and "we." The pronouns "he," "him," and "his" have much higher frequencies than the feminine pronouns. On the other hand "mother" has a higher frequency in every grade than "father." It will be observed that "like" shows a constant decrease of 134 to 35 while "love" occurs more than 21 times per 10,000 only in the second grade, again emphasizing the growing away from things personal.

Practically all of the words showing an increase are those contributing to more complex sentence structure such as "of," "with," "but," "that," "so," "as," etc. The trend from the general to the specific is shown in the decreased use of "a" and the increased use of "that."

After analyzing the one hundred compositions from each of the grades for

# The Approach To Creative Expression

MABEL F. ALTSTETTER  
*Miami University, Oxford, Ohio*

**A**NY FORM of creative expression undertaken by a group of average children needs a series of developmental experiences as a background for the expression. Expression cannot come until there are ideas to express and the wish to express them.

Children's so-called creative writing is frequently done on a day set aside for that purpose. A topic is assigned and children write. Criticism is based on rhyme, verse pattern and grammatical correctness. In a surprising number of schools almost anything without a false rhyme or limping meter is accepted and praised.

Teachers of piano made unintelligent approach to their field for several generations. Youthful conscripts to the cause of culture sat through many unhappy hours of uninspired finger exercises that had little or no value because they were meaningless to the child. Thoughtful teachers approach beginners through marching, singing, dancing, and hearing much good music of a kind the pupils can understand and enjoy. Above all, real tunes, that is, real musical ideas are at once a part of the beginners' first experience with the keyboard.

There is much good writing being done in American schools, but for every good verse or paragraph there are numberless dull, unimaginative, joyless productions.

It would seem that the remedy lies in the approach that is made to creativeness on the part of both pupils and teachers.

The listless compliance in the line of duty by teachers whose spiritual eyes are blind, who have few interests and less understanding, who accept uncritically anything produced by children can do more harm than good. Such teachers cannot guide or inspire creativeness.

Anything that helps to make teachers and pupils sensitive to beauty and richness of experience is worthwhile. Probably the first approach should be made through sharing the experiences of others, through hearing much good poetry well read in a situation where the hearing is an enjoyable thing. At first there should be little discussion beyond that necessary to make a poem clear. Later, poems may also be compared to see how poets differ or are alike in their interpretation of the same idea or scene. The same should be done with prose.

Pupils should be encouraged to talk about things they have seen or felt, to make them clear to others. It helps to talk about "Smells I like most," "Sounds that please me," or "Sounds that make me lonely," "Colors that make me glad." Poetry and prose of established worth can be woven into these discussions without invidious comparison.

Individual and class lists of colorful and interesting words and ideas should be kept. The teacher should keep her own and share it occasionally with pupils. These lists may be made up of things heard and seen. Placing on the board a list of words from which to choose the most interesting is helpful.

Detroit Mich.

Collecting beauty from the community is worth the effort. Watching for objects silhouetted against the sky brings its reward. The slender finger of a church steeple, a soaring buzzard, a pine tree with twisted branches, a series of planes in a grain elevator, a smokestack, a bent man plowing on a hilltop, an old horse with drooping head alone in a hilltop pasture, an airplane soaring, all these and many more are in every community. One should not neglect other things that the community can offer; the arch of a viaduct, shadows in the water, the curve of a stair-rail in a public building, pleasing color arrangement in a vegetable stall or store window, a wisteria vine in bloom on a weather-beaten cabin, trees bare in winter or with black trunks shining in the rain, the line and proportion of a beautiful house, furniture that has functional beauty, color in children's clothes as they play in groups, the charm and beauty of a well-made bed or a table set in simple but graceful fashion, the pleasure of fresh sheets, crisp napkins and towels, the beauty of clean hair and skin, the color of a field of cabbage, the symmetry of a field of corn shocks, the wind in a field of buckwheat—the list is endless.

While these things are being enjoyed, the reading and discussing of poetry and prose should go on. Words with beautiful sounds as well as beautiful meanings should be watched for and talked about.

Little or nothing should be said about rhyme and nothing about meter or verse forms at first. With pupils in the elementary school, probably no stress should be placed on them at any time. The striving for a rhyme may interfere with the expression of the idea. Later, after facility in handling words and ideas has come, rhyming begins. Verse and prose should

always be evaluated in terms of "Is the idea worth writing about?" and then "Has it been said in the best way possible?"

It has been the experience of the writer that after some weeks of this kind of exploring which children thoroughly enjoy, one or more pupils will bring to school writing efforts of their own to share with the rest. It is quite possible to pass judgment on the weak places without hurt feelings. It is a help if writing is unsigned and presented for enjoyment and evaluation without any personal angle. When the volunteer effort doesn't come and the teacher feels that her group is ready to write she may suggest that they try together to say what they felt about an experience. Words, phrases and ideas can be weighed without any personal comment.

The writer has tried the developmental program suggested above with both elementary pupils and college students and it works with both groups. It must be confessed that frequently the college students have had their creativeness so stultified by having to write something instead of having something to write that the task of awakening takes both time and genuine effort, but it is worth it. The evidence of growth in writing is its own reward and the pleasure of the student in finding just the right word to say what he wants to say makes Sentimental Tommy very real.

It might be added that the teacher grows with the explorations of her pupils. She can be far more helpful because she understands what has happened to those under her care. She is not concerned with contributing to the school paper as an end in itself. What really concerns her is that her pupils are becoming sensitive to beauty and write because they wish to share their experiences.

WOMEN TEACHERS

# Acquisition of a Reading Vocabulary

MARTHA H. BRADLEY\*, LORETTA A. CAHILL\*

HARRY L. TATE†

*Whitney School, Chicago*

**I**N THIS article the authors are reporting the results of the third and fourth of a series of vocabulary experiments being conducted at the Whitney School in the attempt to isolate and measure the influence of different factors that enter into vocabulary building. The reports on the first and second experiments have been published.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of Experiment III is to determine the effect upon reading vocabulary building of the clarification of the meanings of words. The fourth experiment is designed to discover the effectiveness in vocabulary enlargement of using words in oral sentences.

The experiment was conducted with 8-B pupils numbering 22 boys and 17 girls in the Experimental Group, and 22 boys and 17 girls in the Control Group. The personnel of Experiment IV consisted of 24 boys and 17 girls in the Experimental Group, and 23 boys and 17 girls in the Control Group, all from the fifth grade.

Table I contains the data from which a comparison of the classes of each grade in regard to some fundamental learning factors can be made. The negligible differences indicate an apparent equality of capacities. Data are given only for the pupils who were in membership for the duration of the experiments.

\* English Teacher

† Principal

<sup>1</sup> *The Modern Language Journal*, December, 1938, pp. 214-218.

TABLE I  
COMPARISON OF THE X AND C GROUPS OF GRADES  
8 AND 5 AS TO CHRONOLOGICAL AGE, MENTAL  
AGE, AND INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Grade and Group	Number of Cases	Chronological Age Medians	Mental Age Medians	Intelligence Quotient Medians
8	X 39	13-1.8	13-3.5	99.5
	C 39	13-2.0	13-3.0	101.0
5	X 41	10-6.0	11-2.0	108.0
	C 40	10-5.5	11-1.5	108.2

The study words for both experiments were taken from Test 2, Form W of the New Stanford Reading Test, a multiple-choice test concerning the meanings of eighty words. Since the results of the testing showed that approximately 25 per cent of the words were familiar to the children they were not used in the experiment. From the remainder a few words were selected and studied each day in all four groups. Since some words required more time for mastery than others neither the number of words nor the daily time devoted to their study was constant. The daily time ranged from 7 to 35 minutes with an average of 18.75 minutes for the fifth grade and from 4 to 17 minutes with an average of 9.21 minutes for the eighth grade. The former had 48 lessons and the latter 43 lessons.

## Procedure

In order to prevent the results from being affected by varying methods a series of steps in procedure was set up and followed in every lesson with extreme care. These steps with the exception of those

dealing with the experimental factor are the same as used in Experiments I and II<sup>2</sup>.

1. The teacher placed the words upon the blackboard previous to the class period.
2. The teacher pronounced the word for the class.
3. The class pronounced the word in unison.
4. Every pupil found the word in his dictionary.
5. A pupil read the definition.
6. In all groups except Experiment III, C Group, clarification of definitions was allowed.
7. Each pupil entered the word and definition in his notebook.
8. In Experiment III, X Group, any wrong idea concerning the meaning of the word was corrected, while in the C Group it was not. An accurate record of all mistakes, however, was kept and after the experiment had been completed the C Group reviewed the words involved and had the benefit of corrections.
9. In Experiment IV, X Group, the words were used in oral sentences, while in the C Group they were not.

Only two teachers participated in the work, one handling both fifth grade groups and the other both eighth-grade groups. Both were present every day of the experiment. Ten pupils averaged 2.1 absences in the X Group of Experiment III, and 14 pupils averaged 2.1 absences in the C Group. In Experiment IV, X Group, there was an average of 2.7 absences for 14 pupils, while in the C

Group the average was 3.2 absences for 13 pupils.

### Results

At the conclusion of the word study program Test 2 of the New Stanford Reading Test was again given to all of the pupils. The data in Table II are derived from both the initial and final testings and give a basis for comparing the two groups in each experiment.

TABLE II  
SHOWING INITIAL AND FINAL TEST SCORES, GAINS OF  
BOTH GROUPS OF BOTH EXPERIMENTS IN SCORE  
POINTS AND PER CENT, GAINS OF X GROUPS  
MINUS GAINS OF C GROUPS IN SCORE  
POINTS AND PER CENT  
(Test 2, New Stanford Reading Tests)

Grade Group	Initial Test Medians	Final Test Medians	Gain Points	X Gains		X Gains Minus C Gains %
				Minus C Gains	Minus C Gains %	
8	X 88	117	29	32.95		
	C —2	+4	23	25.55	+6	+26.0
5	X 66	110	44	66.66		
	C 67 —1	115 —5	48	71.64	—4	—9.0

Naturally, the results prove that pupils can make enormous gains in vocabulary acquisition by means of a sustained word study program. In these two experiments gains ranged from a minimum of 23 score points, or 25.55 per cent to a maximum of 48 score points, or 71.64 per cent. The groups averaged a gain of 36 score points or 49.2 per cent. Estimating that one point on the test is equivalent to approximately one month's growth, a group gain of 4.9 school years was accomplished in 2.25 school months. The much larger gains of the fifth grade groups are due to a lesser initial acquaintance with the word meanings as shown in the second column.

In the eighth-grade experiment the X Group established a gain of 6 score points, or 26 per cent, over the C Group, while in the fifth-grade experiment the X Group suffered a loss of 4 score points,

<sup>2</sup>The Modern Language Journal, December, 1938, pp. 214-218.

or 9 per cent. The results indicate clearly that clarification of mistaken ideas concerning the meaning of words is a potent factor in acquiring a vocabulary, while the using of words in oral sentences tends to decrease the gains that result from vocabulary study. Since the latter result is contrary to common belief it may be explained away by the fact that the words that were studied were generally difficult for a fifth grade and therefore the sentences composed did not express thoughts or concepts commonly used in the everyday reading, writing, or conversation of the children. If that is true then the sentences added nothing to the meanings that the children acquired from the definitions, and might have been a detrimental factor.

On the other hand, if these results are true, then a great deal of time is being wasted by pupils, teachers, and writers of texts on spelling and English, by the emphasis put upon the use of the new word in sentences. After a meaning has been discussed by pupils and teacher and everyone has the correct meaning clearly in mind, the use of the word in a sentence could add nothing to its meaning. It would merely show that the pupils who used the word understood it. Such use, then, is a proving device, not a teaching device. It follows that the time devoted to this phase of the work has not only not benefited the pupil, but has actually been a detriment to him because he could have used it advantageously in doing something that has a positive effect upon building a reading vocabulary.

Besides the standardized test, bi-weekly tests constructed by the teachers were used as another means of evaluating the effect of the experimental factors. Each test covered only a specific two-week period and was multiple-choice in nature.

TABLE III  
GRADES OF BOTH GROUPS OF BOTH EXPERIMENTS ON  
FIVE BI-WEEKLY TESTS CONSTRUCTED BY  
TEACHERS, WITH DIFFERENCES IN  
SCORE POINTS AND PER CENT

Test No.	Median of X Group	Median of C Group	Difference (Score Points)	Difference %
Grade Eight				
1	95.00	94.25	+0.75	+0.7
2	89.00	92.50	-3.50	-3.7
3	95.00	95.20	-0.20	-0.2
4	89.50	87.00	+2.50	+2.8
5	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.0
Grade Five				
1	85.00	84.00	+1.00	+1.1
2	79.00	78.00	+1.00	+1.2
3	91.00	90.00	+1.00	+1.1
4	86.00	92.00	-6.00	-6.5
5	98.40	97.60	+0.80	+0.8

The differences in both experiments are not great enough to be of significance. In Grade 5, Test 4, the difference of 6 points, or 6.5 per cent, in favor of the C Group is the greatest of all, but its effect is counterbalanced by the fact that the other four differences favor the X Group.

Teachers commented on the two experiments as follows:

It is very noticeable that children do not like to see mistakes go uncorrected.

By reference to a dictionary a child may get a meaning which will help him in understanding a word in context, but he may use that word wrongly when he constructs a sentence. For example, he may use the wrong preposition with a word, use adjectives as verbs, or use adjectives as adverbs.

There is no need for word study to be dry and boresome to pupils. They are immensely interested in it because it (a) is a source of joy to them, (b) helps them in other studies, (c) increases their speaking vocabularies, (d) helps them to understand the remarks of older people, (e) gives them a feeling of success that adds to self esteem.

# Development of a Meaning Vocabulary in the Intermediate Grades\*

MARTHA L. ADDY

*Southern Oregon College of Education  
Ashland, Oregon*

TEACHERS TODAY realize the importance of an adequate meaning vocabulary. Without a developed meaning vocabulary the child is able to arrive at only a very few of the ideas presented in the printed or spoken materials which he sees or hears. When we add to a child's stock, words which he can utilize with meaning, we add to the equipment with which his communication and thinking are done. He is more able to get a clear picture of what he has read or heard, and thus his understandings and insights are broadened.

It is most natural for children to communicate, to ask and to tell about the many things that hold their interests. Since words are used as symbols of ideas, the more words one knows, the better he can express himself either in oral or written form. But before a word is of much value it must have a clear established idea for the user.

Much research has been done concerning vocabulary development in the elementary grades. Most of this research has had to do with the construction of word lists. Little has been done toward determining techniques of teaching a meaning vocabulary. Yet it seems important that teachers know what techniques are now used in helping boys and girls to enlarge their stock of words. The following study was made to discover the methods that teachers in the intermediate

grades utilize in selecting, presenting, and securing mastery of the words which they think should become a part of the children's general meaning vocabulary.

The following steps were used in gathering the data: (1) a critical examination was made of educational periodicals from January 1919, to January 1937, of professional books on the psychology of elementary school subjects; of professional books on the technique of teaching reading and language; and of recent intermediate grade text books in language and reading, to identify means and ways suggested by the authors concerning the construction and development of a meaning vocabulary. (2) From the findings of the above readings, a questionnaire consisting of three headings—(a) selection of words, (b) techniques of teaching meaning of words, and (c) types of lessons to fix the meanings—was constructed. A space was provided for each item to be checked as to use, and rated as to efficiency. The rate of efficiency was classified under four headings: most efficient, average efficient, least efficient, and non-efficient. Space was left at the end of the list of items under each heading for additional ways, techniques and sources to be added by the teachers, supervisors and principals.

One questionnaire was sent to each of

\*Summary of a study prepared under the direction of Dr. Paul McKee, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctor's degree.

the state normal schools and teachers colleges in each state. One was sent to the college of education at each state university. These were to be filled out by one or more of the intermediate grade critics, supervisors or principals in each college or university elementary school. The questionnaire was also sent to the superintendents of the larger cities in each state; to be filled out by supervisors, principals, and teachers who were doing supervision or teaching in grades four, five and six. In all, 250 replies were received.

The findings were placed under the three headings in the questionnaire, and were further grouped by response—supervisors, principals, and the teachers of the fourth, fifth and sixth grades.

TABLE I  
SOURCE OF WORDS TAUGHT

Name of Items	Rating of Items (by per cent of responses)					Total times Rated
	Total times Checked	Most Effective	Average Effective	Least Effective	Non-Effective	
Reading material used in literature	92	65	27	4	.9	85
Reading material of the content subjects	95	81	18	2	.8	94
Pupils individual lists	64	40	42	12	3	56
Lists of expressive words by speakers	48	26	21	15	26	40
Overworked by pupils	62	24	43	26	5	62
Words unknown to pupils upon which meaning of text depends	92	65	30	7	1	90

TABLE I (Continued)

Name of Items	Rating of Items (by per cent of responses)					
	Total times Checked	Most Effective	Average Effective	Least Effective	Non-Effective	Total times Rated
Words whose true meaning is misunderstood by pupils	87	53	40	3	1	70
Word lists in language books	62	12	41	27	19	57
Supplementary reading material	82	21	54	10	13	78
Standard word lists	38	19	32	20	28	32
Word lists in literature books	44	14	30	27	27	40

#### Sources of Words to be Taught

The results from the section of the questionnaire dealing with the sources that teachers, principals, and supervisors use in selecting the words are shown in Table I. These results show plainly that the reading materials from literature and the reading materials from the content subjects are used by more teachers, supervisors, and principals than any other source of words to be taught.

All sources pertaining to word lists were low in percentage of use as well as being rated highest in percentage of non-effectiveness. Standard word lists were used the least by all teachers and were rated by the greatest per cent of persons as being a non-effective source.

Only 45 per cent of the sources were used by 75 per cent or more of the teachers, and only 36 per cent of the sources were rated as to relative effectiveness by 75 per cent or more of the teachers.

The source, the reading material of the content subjects, was the only one rated as the most effective source by 75 per cent or more of the teachers. Eighty-

## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

one per cent of those rating this source said it was the most effective.

All the principals and supervisors answering the questionnaire used words unknown on which the meaning of the text depends as a source from which to select words. Although they rated the reading materials of the content subjects as most effective, a rank of second *in use* was given it by this group.

More fourth- and fifth-grade teachers used the reading materials of the content subjects than any other source, while the sixth-grade teachers used the reading materials of literature.

All groups of teachers rated the reading materials of the content subjects as the most effective source.

The various groups of teachers agreed that word lists were a non-effective source, but they differed in opinion as to the particular list. Principals, supervisors, and sixth-grade teachers rated the word lists in literature books lowest; fourth-grade teachers found that the lists of expressive words by speakers were non-effective. Lists of words found in language books was the source thought non-effective by the fifth-grade teachers.

TABLE II  
TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING NEW WORDS

Name of Items	Total times Checked	Rating of Items (by per cent of responses)				
		Most Effective	Average Effective	Least Effective	Non-Effective	Total times Rated
The study of the content in which the word appears and the environment surrounding it	90	76	18	3	1	88
Showing the relations of new words with their proper associations	72	44	42	8	4	60

TABLE II (Continued)

Name of Items	Total times Checked	Rating of Items (by per cent of responses)				
		Most Effective	Average Effective	Least Effective	Non-Effective	Total times Rated
Securing the definition from the dictionary	94	20	48	25	4	91
Studying the etymology of the word to find the root and make meaning clear	58	11	32	37	18	55
Noting the use of the word in the sentence in which it appears	93	69	25	3	1	91
Studying synonyms and antonyms	84	13	57	18	6	90
Studying prefixes and suffixes	78	12	45	28	7	81
The use of pictures to construct the mental pictures	74	59	30	8	1	65
Use of concrete objects	74	61	28	6	1	61
Study of word combinations or compound words	77	15	53	23	4	73
Use the most effective words to interpret a specific meaning	75	37	49	11	1	75
Relating the word to former experiences	91	71	22	4	1	88
Through the aid of activities	68	65	26	6	3	66

*Techniques of Teaching New Words*

Teachers are not using one or a few techniques to teach the meaning of new words, but many techniques. Sixty-nine per cent of the thirteen items listed in the questionnaire as shown in Table II

were used by 75 per cent or more of the total number of teachers answering.

More teachers use the dictionary than any other type of lesson. One hundred per cent of the supervisors and principals used this technique. All of the sixth-grade teachers used the technique of having their pupils note the use of the word in the sentence in which it appears. The fifth-grade teachers gave the study of the content in which the word appears first rank. This technique was rated by all groups of teachers as being the most effective technique used by them.

Relating the new words to former experiences is a popular technique and was the one used by the most fourth-grade teachers. Although 53 per cent of the listed techniques were rated by 75 per cent or more of the teachers as to their relative effectiveness, only two techniques were rated as being most effective by 75 per cent or more of the teacher groups, namely: relating the word to former experiences and, studying the content in which the word appears and the environment surrounding it.

The teachers were not consistent in rating the relative effectiveness of each different technique. This may be due to their use of many techniques, and lack of concentration on a few to really determine their relative value.

The technique used by the most fourth-grade teachers, relating the word to former experiences, was given by the supervisors and principals as being most effective. Activities proved most effective in teaching the meaning of new words to the fifth-grade children.

The teachers think there is no value in the study of the etymology of a word to discover its meaning. It is rated a non-effective technique in the intermediate grades, and consequently is used by the

fewest teachers. Teachers find that studying antonyms and synonyms is only of average effectiveness in teaching meaning of new words.

TABLE III

Name of Items	Total times Checked	Rating of Items (by per cent of responses)					Total times Rated
		Most Effective	Average Effective	Least Effective	Non-Effective		
Reproducing poems and stories in author's words	64	35	23	23	1	65	
Dictation of paragraphs	56	10	35	31	22	59	
Definite exercises in variety of expressions	73	40	33	16	3	66	
Flash card drill of misused or unknown words	40	20	35	18	25	36	
Regular conversation lessons using new words	72	60	27	4	7	71	
Matching words with synonyms and antonyms	81	24	55	15	5	82	
The selection of the best descriptive words	90	62	31	4	1	83	
Informal and incidental teaching	87	46	33	19	5	84	
Exercises to find certain words and give their meaning	76	19	44	30	5	74	
Regular word study of good words for conversation	62	29	36	14	12	59	
Regular daily word study	58	45	30	10	14	52	
Vocabulary tests	64	20	46	19	13	62	
Vocabulary games	64	23	43	22	10	58	

## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

TABLE III (Continued)

Name of Items	Rating of Items (by per cent of responses)					Total times Rated
	Total times Checked	Most Effective	Average Effective	Least Effective	Non-Effective	
Wall charts	35	18	30	17	32	34
Card files	28	8	23	25	42	22
Putting the gist of paragraphs in two or three sentences	80	43	42	11	3	78
Finding words in reading most worthwhile	64	33	52	10	3	56
Selection of most effective words	84	47	44	4	4	78
Keeping word lists on board to select from when writing paragraphs	62	40	30	18	10	57
Filling in blank spaces with best word listed	84	40	45	5	8	81
Grouping words in families	49	11	42	26	11	47
Regular dictionary work	83	29	36	26	7	82
Finding words for specific use	62	35	52	9	3	56
Finding adjectives to describe certain words	78	36	47	13	3	70
Classification of words or phrases according to the character or topics in reading material	48	10	44	21	11	45
Supplying correct words to complete statements	84	34	48	11	4	84
Listing dialect words in reading	33	0	28	32	39	31
Doing reference reading to particular terms	43	21	42	17	18	34

*Types of Lessons to Fix Word Meanings*

There is a tendency among classroom teachers to select and use a few types of lessons to fix the meaning of words. This is shown by the fact that only 30 per cent of the items were used by 75 per cent or more of the teachers.

The type of lesson used by most of the teachers, except those teaching the sixth grade, was having the children select the best descriptive word. These teachers also rated this lesson most effective.

The sixth-grade teachers used the lesson of filling in blank spaces with the best word listed most frequently, and found informal and incidental teaching the most valuable, and most effective type of lesson to fix words in the children's vocabulary.

Cards files were used the least by teachers, who ranked it a non-effective means of fixing the words. Dictation of paragraphs, grouping words in families or classifying them according to the character or topics in the reading materials were lessons found by teachers as being least effective in building a meaning vocabulary.

There seems to be an agreement among teachers that there is no really outstanding type of lesson by which to fix the meaning of the words, since no type of lesson among those listed was rated as most effective by 75 per cent or more of the teachers.

*Summary*

Words possess more definite meaning and importance when they are shown in relation to the total situation. Words should be taught in contact with the reality which they symbolize. Teachers realized this when they found that the study of the content in which the word appears and the environment surround-

# Editorial

CASPER CARL CERTAIN

1885-1940

C. C. CERTAIN, founder and editor of *The Elementary English Review*, died December 18, 1940, in Grace Hospital, Detroit, after a brief illness.

For thirty-four years he gallantly served the cause of education, pioneering new territory, clearing roads that others might easily follow, fighting for the educational and social causes that he believed in.

He was widely known for *The Elementary English Review*, and for his work in school libraries.

*The Review* was established in 1924. Mr. Certain saw that elementary school English, basic to all education, was given insufficient recognition, and that teachers of the subject had too little representation in periodical literature. To meet this need, he established the magazine as a clearing house of information on the subject, and as a forum for discussion. His editorship, undertaken in a thoroughly unselfish and professional spirit, was so just, liberal, and courageous, that the magazine has come to possess great authority.

Other editorial activities of Mr. Certain include the survey and reorganization of the publications of the Junior Red Cross which he was commissioned to do in 1924, and the editing of publications (Annual Research Bulletins, committee reports, and the *Handbook of Good English*) of The National Conference on Research in English.

*Standard Library Organization and Equipment for Secondary Schools*, and *Elementary School Library Standards* by

Mr. Certain, published by the National Education Association and the American Library Association, and widely reprinted by state departments of education, were the original school library standards, and are still adhered to. Mr. Certain was appointed by the United States Bureau of Education to make a survey of school libraries in the southern states, and served as chairman of the committees on library standards of the Department of Secondary School Principals, and the Department of Elementary School Principals, and as chairman of the school library section of the American Library Association. He was the first supervisor of school libraries in Detroit, and is credited with the establishment of the elementary school library.

In 1932, together with Dr. B. R. Buckingham, Dr. M. R. Trabue, and others, Mr. Certain organized the National Conference on Research in English. He filled the office of secretary-treasurer—not infrequently at considerable personal sacrifice—until his death. Under his influence, this organization offered, at its annual meetings, a series of brilliant programs, presented by America's most distinguished educators.

In the National Council of Teachers of English, he filled the offices of auditor, treasurer, and chairman of various committees.

As a teacher, Mr. Certain was greatly beloved; his teaching was an art, in an exalted sense of the term. It was his nature to look upon every student as an intensely interesting individual. His teaching experiences included high-

school (Central High School, Birmingham, Alabama; Cass Technical and Northwestern High Schools, Detroit), elementary school supervision (associate director of language education and supervisor of school libraries, Detroit), and college (Alabama Polytechnic Institute, University of Wisconsin, University of North Carolina, Detroit Teachers College, Wayne University, and summer school teaching at the University of Alabama, University of Utah, and State Teachers College, Keene, N. H.). He developed the use of the social group in education, and was one of the first to use the laboratory method in teaching English.

During the World War, he served as head of English in the Army Education Corps with the American Army of Occupation in France and Germany.

C. C. Certain was born in Huntsville, Alabama, and educated at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute (B.S. and M.S.)

and at Teachers College, Columbia University (M.A.). Besides belonging to many national educational organizations, as the American Association of School Administrators, the College English Association, the American Educational Research Association, and the National Conference on Research in English, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta, and Phi Delta Kappa.

To C. C. Certain, nothing was impossible—no wrong too deeply entrenched to be routed, no cause too hopeless to be rescued—for he was without fear. An old schoolmaster who had served in the War between the States once said of C. C. Certain's father, his comrade-in-arms—"He was a good soldier. He was always in the thick of the fighting." And it may be said of Casper Carl Certain: He was a valiant soldier in a great cause.

*The Elementary English Review* will continue under the editorship of his wife, Julia Lockwood Certain

#### THINKING, WRITING, GROWING

(Continued from page 16)

interest and extent of vocabulary, a third analysis was made to determine the spelling deficiencies at each level. Space does not permit the recording of this entire phase of the study. However, in looking over the total list of misspelled words one is impressed with the great number of simple words misspelled, and the extent to which spelling could be improved by such simple procedures as emphasizing correct pronunciation and by discussing the meanings of words which sound alike but are spelled differently.

This study, carried on with the assistance of the Bureau of Research under the direction of Dr. Lillie Lewin Bowman,

shows the outstanding interests of pupils at each developmental level and the nature of the experiences through which these interests have been developed. It reveals trends in vocabulary growth and indicators of such growth. Its contribution in terms of vocabulary are qualitative rather than quantitative.

The study as it stands should be of value to those interested in planning and selecting curricular materials. While it offers no direct solution to the problem of improving written expression, it points to factors fundamental in such growth, and suggests channels of investigation.

(Continued on page 30)

# Recent Books For Children

**The Iron Doctor.** By Agnes Danforth Hewes. Illus. by Herbert Morton Stoops. Houghton Mifflin, 1940.

This book has nearly everything that makes good reading for 'teen age boys and girls. The reader, whether young or old, can hardly put it down, once he opens it.

The story takes Jed Sheldon from the time of his escape from an orphanage where he is brutally mistreated, through his work as a tender and deep-water diver, until, with Tom King, he helps set the piers making possible the great San Francisco-Oakland Bridge.

The author makes character more prominent and interesting even than the tremendously absorbing subject matter. She makes clear through incident, and without a jot of pedantry, that a diver's work depends on courage, alertness, resourcefulness, co-operation, and responsibility. The book answers "no" to the question, "Has civilization become so decadent in the modern industrial world that the old virtues are atrophied?" Above everything else, the book is interesting; it is made up of thrilling adventure. There is no false suspense; the only mystery is that attached to the death of Jed's father. But the real excitement is furnished by the divers' work. "The Iron Doctor" is the decompressor which enables the divers inspecting the deep pier foundations of the bridge to do their hazardous work with a greater degree of safety.

**A Good House for a Mouse.** Story by Irmengarde Eberle. Pictures by Eloise Wilkin. Julian Messner, 1940. \$1.00.

Dinny liked mice, but her mother, father, and Cousin Charlotte didn't share her attachment. So when Mother set about to clean the spare-room closet where Dinny knew a mouse had her nest, Dinny acted discretely, and effectively.

Several things make this book outstanding for children of six and upwards. First of all, the subject-matter (affection and care for small animals) appeals strongly to children. Second, the story is unified, with consistent plot development. Then the pictures are delightful, although they may not have the same appeal for children that they have for adults who recall the days of long black stockings and foot-operated sewing-machines. Finally, little girls will like gentle, black-eyed Dinny.

**Ameliaranne Keeps School.** Told by Constance Heward. Pictured by S. B. Pearse. David McKay, n. d. \$1.00.

Children who do not know this resourceful little English girl are missing a delightful book-friend. In

this thirteenth volume of the Ameliaranne series, Ameliaranne takes charge of a nursery school for a afternoon. The events are told with a direct matter-of-factness, and illustrated with soft-toned pictures of chubby, solemn youngsters. The book is a wholesome addition to little children's bookshelves.

**Debby.** By Siddie Joe Johnson. Illus. by Ninon MacKnight. Longmans, Green, 1940. \$2.00.

Debby lives in a trailer down on the Texas Gulf coast, near Corpus Christi. She likes to go to the Sanders' farm to play with the little Mexican girl whose parents are tenants, and to do the small chores that Mrs. Sanders assigns her. The story is a series of events rather than a plot, and there is little excitement. Nevertheless, the book will interest girls of seven and above.

The author is sensitive to the feeling of place, and through Debby's eyes, gives an appealing picture of the Texas country. Debby herself is well-individualized—a lively, affectionate, and sensitive child. The incidents of the story are raised above the commonplace by the author's insight.

The typography of the volume is unusual and attractive.

**Elizabeth, the Tudor Princess.** By Marian King. Drawings by Elinore Blaisdell. Stokes, 1940. \$2.00.

This carefully prepared life of Queen Elizabeth is not only painstakingly authentic, but is engrossing reading. The story as the title indicates, deals with Elizabeth's life as a princess—from the time of her birth, September 7, 1533, an unwanted daughter, through her coronation on November 25, 1558.

A tempestuous story it is, for the Princess was often out of favor with her royal father, and was indeed so neglected that on one occasion her governess, Lady Margaret Bryan, was forced to write Thomas Cromwell, the King's secretary, begging him to furnish the child with clothes, "for she hath neither gown, nor kirtle, nor petticoat, nor no manner of linen, nor smocks, nor kerchiefs, nor rails, nor body stichets, nor handkerchiefs, nor sleeves, nor mufflers, nor biggens."

After the accession of her elder sister, Elizabeth was almost constantly a prisoner, and repeatedly in danger of her life. That she lived through plots, political intrigues, and jealousies to succeed to the throne was due to her amazing tact and discretion.

The author has made a careful study of the period, and has based every detail upon chronicles, records, letters, and State Papers.

## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

**The Butterfly Shawl.** A story of Spanish California, 1826. By Grace S. Dawson. Illus. by Loren Barton. Doubleday, Doran, 1940. \$2.00.

Here is pictured the feudal society of Spanish California—the merrymakings, the folk-songs, the customs. There is considerable exciting incident to recommend the story: a boy whose memory is lost, Indian raids, a romance, and finally, the recovery of the butterfly shawl by the girl for whom it was intended. For girls 8-12.

**Paradise Valley.** By Valenti Angelo. Illus. with lithographs by the author. Viking, 1940. \$2.00.

Pedro, the son of a section-hand on the Southern Pacific, is the central character; the setting is the Ne-

vada desert. This book would seem to have little appeal to children. The action is slow; there is no strong unifying plot. The incident of the tramp leader, injured and deserted by his fellows, is not followed up. There are long discourses by Uncle Pio, expounding a vague agrarian philosophy. The book is dull even to a persistent adult; to a child, for whom reading is a newly acquired skill, it will be even duller.

**Children of the Fiery Mountain.** Written and illus. by Marian Cannon. Dutton, 1940. \$2.00.

Three American children on a coffee plantation in Guatemala have fun and excitement in this beautiful and strange country. The adventures will interest children, as will the animal pets. The drawings are colorful, but crude.

### DEVELOPMENT OF A MEANING VOCABULARY IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

(Continued from page 26)

ing it, and the noting of the word in the sentence in which it appears are the two most effective techniques of teaching the meaning of new words to children.

Before a word is of much value to any one it must give a clear, accurate and established idea. Selecting the best descriptive word for a particular situation was found to be the most popular type of lesson used by teachers to fix the meaning of new words.

The study of the etymology of words, of suffixes, infixes and prefixes very definitely does not have a place in the vocabulary training of intermediate grade children.

The majority of teachers, supervisors,

and principals have a very definite idea as to the ways to select words for teaching, and as to the techniques and types of lessons to develop a meaning vocabulary.

There is no scientific method by which to rate the relative effectiveness of a method, or device in vocabulary training and development. Many teachers use a certain means to secure a word and teach its meaning, but are not able to rate it by relative effectiveness.

There is a greater agreement among teachers as to the relative effectiveness of techniques of teaching word meanings than as to the relative effectiveness of types of lessons, or sources of words for study.

### THINKING, WRITING, GROWING

(Continued from page 28)

San Francisco is now planning a city-wide survey in the same general field. The planned study is to be more carefully controlled as well as more extensive. It will have for its purpose the determination of actual steps to be taken by teachers in the encouragement of continuous

growth in written expression during this period of rapid child development. It is also hoped that further study will provide a basic word list of the running written vocabularies used by children at the various growth levels.

# Word Group Frequencies

## Abstract of a Master's Thesis

Campbell, Justine Tandy. "A Study of Word Group Frequency Found in Elementary School Readers." Master's Thesis, Teachers College, University of Cincinnati. Directed by Dr. Carter V. Good and Miss Frances Jenkins, 1940. Unpublished. Filed in university library.

*Character of Research.* A normative survey of word group frequency as found in an examination of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade readers.

*Problem.* To discover the types of word groups which the intermediate grade child will meet in his daily reading of school texts, in order to present a scientific foundation for teacher emphasis and a basis for corrective procedure.

*Limitations.* An examination was made of clause constructions found in six fourth-grade readers, phrase constructions in four fifth-grade readers, and noun and verb word groups found in three sixth-grade readers.

*Procedure.* The per cent of frequency of each type of word group construction was determined for each book on the basis of total word groups found. These findings were averaged for each grade level.

### *Findings.*

#### Frequency of Clause Constructions Found in Fourth-Grade Readers:

1. Average frequency of clause construction found in fourth-grade reading texts—one clause to every 2.9 sentences.
2. Per cent of frequency of clause constructions found in fourth-grade readers—

Adverbial clause .....	51.08
Noun clause .....	29.7
Adjective clause .....	18.7

Hence all forms are found frequently enough to warrant emphasis.
3. The adverbial clause of "time" is the most frequently used adverbial construction.
4. Adverbial clauses of condition, manner, and cause show a high per cent of frequency.

#### Frequency of Phrase Constructions Found in Fifth-Grade Readers:

1. Average frequency of phrase construction found in fifth-grade readers—2.2 per sentence.
2. Per cent of frequency of types of phrase construction in total constructions examined.

Adverbial phrase .....	51.1
Adjectival phrase .....	27.3
Non-Modal Verb phrase .....	21.3

3. The infinitive construction composes almost two-thirds of the total non-modal verb forms.

Frequency of Noun and Verb Word Groups Found in Sixth-Grade Readers: Noun and verb constructions are found with a high frequency rate in sixth-grade reading texts, which indicates that both constructions should receive emphasis at this level.

### *Implications.*

#### Suggestions to the Class Room Teacher:

1. Organization of class into groups of comparable reading ability.
2. Selection of material to suit needs and abilities of various groups.
3. Direction of child's individual reading along lines of pupil interest.
4. Frequent use of oral reading.
5. Emphasis upon the various techniques of reading in order to increase reading rate and comprehension.

#### Recommendations to Teachers of Remedial Reading:

1. Use of a permanent file of individual case study records, including
  - a. records of the mental level and intelligence quotient through the use of individual tests.
  - b. reports of results of carefully administered standardized diagnostic reading tests, and reading comprehension tests.
2. Use of graphs in order to give the child a realization of his progress in reading rate, comprehension, and fluency of word usage in writing.
3. Use of simple exercises in finding correct word groups, true-false exercises, and matching exercises.
4. Frequent exercises with emphasis upon scanning, phrase finding, and analysis of content are recommended for more mature readers.

### *Summary of Findings Relating to Clause Constructions.*

Total number of books examined—6

Total number of sentences examined—20,630

Total number of clauses examined—11,120

Frequency of clause construction per sentence—one clause to every 2.19 sentences.

#### Kinds of clauses and average per cent of frequency:

Adverb Clause—51.08

Noun Clause—29.7

Adjective Clause—18.7

## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

Types of Adverb Clauses and average per cent of frequency:

Time—	38.9
Condition—	18.1
Manner—	12.28
Cause—	11.98
Place—	7.47
Degree—	6.26
Purpose—	4.44

*Summary of Findings Relating to Phrase Constructions.*

Total number of books examined—	4
Total number of sentences examined—	15,590
Total number of phrases examined—	34,620
Frequency of phrase construction per sentence—	2.2
Kinds of phrases and average per cent of frequency	
Adverb phrase—	51.5
Adjective phrase—	27.3
Non-Modal Verb phrase—	21.35

Types of Non-Modal Verb phrases and average per cent of frequency:

Infinitive—	62.25
Participle—	17.7
Gerund—	19.4

*Summary of Findings Relating to Noun and Verb Word Groups.*

Total number of books examined—	3
Total number of sentences examined—	14,100
Total number of word groups examined—	82,800
Frequency of noun groups per sentence—	3.89
Frequency of verb groups per sentence—	1.69
Per cent of frequency of noun groups in total groups—	66.26
Per cent of frequency of verb groups in total groups—	33.63

### ACQUISITION OF A READING-VOCABULARY

(Continued from page 21)

A dictionary for children should provide several examples of each word in sentences besides the pronunciations and meanings. The contextual setting serves to clarify the definition.

Children get fallacious ideas as to meanings when they rely solely upon dictionary meanings. The pupil who gave this sentence, "The opera singer had a very vulgar voice," was guided by the meaning "low" for "vulgar."

#### *Conclusions*

Within the limitations of the controls of this experiment the data secured point to certain conclusions which may or may not be universally true.

1. As judged by the results of Test 2, Form W, of the New Stanford Reading Test, very great gains in reading-vocabulary acquisition can be made by fifth- and

eighth-grade pupils over a period as short as two months.

2. In short-period word study, as shown by teachers' bi-weekly non-accumulative multiple-choice tests wherein the words of Test 2, New Stanford Reading Test, Form W, are used an experimental factor has no effect.

3. Data from the New Stanford Test prove conclusively that clarification of meaning over a period of two months is an important factor in acquiring a reading vocabulary where eighth-grade pupils are involved.

4. The use of words in oral sentences by fifth-grade pupils, over a period of two months, as evidenced by the standardized test data, tends to decrease the acquisition of a reading-vocabulary.

5. Teacher observations show that children are keenly interested in word study which need not be uninteresting.

# Tenth Annual Meeting of The National Conference on Research in English

Atlantic City, New Jersey - February 22 to 25, 1941

---

Saturday, February Twenty-second

Noon—12:30 o'clock,  
and early afternoon } Luncheon, 12:30 p. m.  
Surf Room, Ambassador Hotel  
Tickets at the door (\$1.50).

Note: Owing to the nature of this program, it will be impossible to accommodate auditors arriving after the luncheon. Will those who plan to attend, therefore, please make advance reservations.

Presiding: DORA V. SMITH, President; Professor of Education, College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Report: *Significant Unpublished Research in Elementary School English*—MARGARET HAMPEL, School of Education, Ohio University, Athens.

Report: *Research on the Use of Language Textbooks*—B. R. BUCKINGHAM, Editor, Elementary School Books, Ginn and Company, Boston.

Address: *Rewards of Research*—ARTHUR I. GATES, Teachers College, Columbia University.

*Presentation of Specific Research Problems in English.*

The presentation of each problem is to be limited to 3 minutes. After all problems have been presented, the presiding officer will break the company up into small discussion groups, each group under the leadership of the speaker presenting that research problem.

Discussion leaders and their topics:

*School Clubs and Language Development*—ETHEL MABIE FALK, Formerly Supervisor of Curriculum, Madison, Wisconsin; *The Elementary School Newspaper—an Outlet for Creative Expression*—ROBERT J. NEWBURY, Principal, Edith C. Baker School, Brookline, Massachusetts; *Plans for Co-operative Research on the Classroom Use of Language Textbooks*—M. R. TRABUE, Pennsylvania State College; *Appreciation in Reading*—MABEL FLICK ALTSTETTER, School of Education, Miami University; *Straight Thinking and Command of Language*—JOHN P. MILLIGAN, Dean, New Jersey College of Education, Jersey City; *Basis for Vocabulary Growth in the Elementary School*—JAMES A. FITZGERALD, Fordham University; *The Co-ordinated Use of Readers and Language Textbooks*—MILDRED A. DAWSON, University of Tennessee; *Use of a Handbook of English to Promote Language Growth*—E. W. DOLCH, University of Illinois; *Certain Aspects of Semantics Important in the Teaching of Elementary School English*—J. C. SEEGERS, Temple University; *New Trends in Primary Readers*—GEORGE SPACHE, Friends Seminary and Brooklyn Friends School, New York; *English in an Activity Program*—MAYCIE SOUTHALL, George Peabody College for Teachers.

Monday, February Twenty-fourth

Morning Meeting } Program to be announced  
9:15 o'clock }

Tuesday, February Twenty-fifth

Morning Meeting } Club Room, Ambassador Hotel  
9:15 o'clock }

Presiding: DORA V. SMITH, President.

Program Topic: *Implications of Pupil Growth and Social Development for the Program in Language.*

*Language Development in the Primary Grades*—BERNICE LEARY. Row, Peterson and Company, Evanston, Illinois.

*Place of the Language Arts in the Newer Elementary School Programs of the South*—ULLIN G. LEAVELL, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee.

*Principles of Growth and Maturity Inherent in Language Problems in the Middle and Upper Grades*—JOHN ANDERSON, College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

*Newer Appraisal Techniques in Language*—J. WAYNE WRIGHTSTONE, New York City Board of Education.

Noon—12:00 o'clock sharp } Luncheon  
Venetian Room, Ambassador Hotel  
} Tickets on sale at the A.A.S.A. Ticket Booth. (\$1.50). To insure a seat, buy early!

Presiding: DORA V. SMITH, President.

*Reading in the Intermediate Grades: A Research Bulletin.*

Presentation — GERTRUDE WHIPPLE, Chairman, Supervisor of Reading, Detroit Public Schools, Detroit, Michigan.

Critical Evaluations—CHARLES H. JUDD, Chairman, American Youth Commission; FRANK FREEMAN, Dean, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley; ERNEST HORN, Professor of Education, State University of Iowa.

#### Officers of the Conference, 1940

President: DORA V. SMITH, Professor of Education, College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Vice-President: MILDRED A. DAWSON, Associate Professor of Elementary Education, School of Education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Secretary-Treasurer: C. C. CERTAIN, Box 67, N. End Sta. Detroit, Michigan.

Executive Committee: Officers of The Conference and BESS GOODYKOONTZ, Assistant U. S. Commissioner of Education; and PAUL MCKEE, Professor of Elementary Education, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley.

Proceedings and official papers published in

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW  
Box 67, North End Sta.

Detroit, Michigan

SCHOOLS DEPT.

PUBLIC LIBRARY  
FEB 18 1941  
DETROIT

# The Elementary English Review

SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT

VOL. XVIII

FEBRUARY 1941

No. 2

## Feature Articles

- Presenting English Lessons by Radio ..... JEANNETTE E. RICE  
Reading and Sentence Elements ..... HELEN D. GIBBONS  
English Errors in Social Studies Notebooks ..... MARION OCHSNER PEASE  
Problems in Primary Book Selection: Selection of  
Supplementary Pre-Primers ..... GEORGE SPACHE  
The Farm, The Farmer, and Food ..... VERDIE McMILLEN  
Language as Social Adaptation ..... WILLIAM E. YOUNG  
All Talking Is Oral English ..... FLORENCE E. PIDGE

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

J. L. CERTAIN, *Editor*  
Detroit, Michigan

\$2.50 a Year

Monthly from October through May

Single Copies 40 Cents

# The Elementary English Review

J. L. Certain, Editor

VOL. XVIII

FEBRUARY 1941

No. 2



The Course of Study in Elementary School English	
Reading	Literature
Book Selection	
School Libraries	
Book Reviews	
Composition	Spelling
Grammar	
Essentials of Speech and Writing	
Standard Tests	
Test Procedures and Remedial Drills	

SUBSCRIPTION RATE  
\$2.50 for one year  
of eight issues

Published  
1940  
January, February, March  
April, May, October  
November, December

## Table of Contents

Frontispiece: Efficiency Is Not Enough.....	34
S. H. MOOREFIELD	
Presenting English Lessons By Radio.....	35
JEANNETTE E. RICE	
Reading and Sentence Elements.....	42
HELEN D. GIBBONS	
English Errors in Social Studies Notebooks.....	47
MARION OCHSNER PEASE	
Problems in Primary Book Selection: Selection of Supplementary Pre-Primers.....	52
GEORGE SPACHE	
The Farm, The Farmer, and Food.....	60
VERDIE McMILLEN	
Language As Social Adaptation.....	63
WILLIAM E. YOUNG	
All Talking Is Oral English.....	69
FLORENCE E. PIDGE	
EDITORIAL .....	71
RECENT BOOKS .....	72

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW is published monthly from October to May at Detroit, Michigan. Subscription price \$2.50 per year; single copies 40 cents. Orders for less than a year's subscription will be charged at the single-copy rate. Postage is prepaid on all orders from the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, Panama Canal Zone, Republic of Panama, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands, Guam, Samoa Islands, Virgin Islands and Spain. Postage is charged extra for Canada and for all other countries in the Postal Union as follows: 24 cents on annual subscriptions (total \$2.74), on single copies 3 cents (total 43 cents). Patrons are requested to make all remittances payable to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW in postal or express money orders or bank drafts. Claims for missing numbers should be made within the month following the regular month of publication. The publishers expect to supply missing numbers free only when losses have been sustained in transit and when the reserve stock will permit. All communications should be addressed to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, Box 67, North End Station, Detroit, Michigan. Entered at the Post Office at Seymour, Ind., and at Detroit, Michigan, as second class matter.

Copyright, 1941 by C. C. Certain  
Printed in the U. S. A.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

*Helping Children to Read.* By GERTRUDE HILDRETH and JOSEPHINE WRIGHT. 96 pp. Cloth \$1.35. Paper 90 cents. A detailed description of procedures in a remedial reading class conducted during a recent summer session at Teachers College, Columbia University: the analysis of each child's problems, the group activities carried on, the individual help given each child, the materials used, the records, and the reports. The facts given here will assist teachers in preventing reading difficulties and in dealing more effectively with children who have reading problems.

*Critical Reading Comprehension in the Intermediate Grades.* By ROMA GANS, PH. D. 135 pp. Cloth \$1.85. Reading comprehension of the type required in reference reading demands the composite ability of understanding the problem under consideration, remembering it while reading, and selecting or rejecting content on the basis of its relevancy and authenticity. This is a study of the reference reading ability of 417 intermediate grade pupils.

*Prevention of Failure in First Grade Reading by Means of Adjusted Instruction.* By HOWARD T. DUNKLIN, PH. D. 111 pp. Cloth \$1.60. This study surveys the literature concerned with primary reading, with a view to developing a tentative program of adjusted instruction which would be practicable in an average schoolroom; tests the program experimentally in order to determine what degree of success would follow its application; and makes the program available for use in further research and in educational practice.

*Units of Work and Centers of Interest in the Organization of the Elementary School Curriculum.* By SADIE GOGGANS, PH. D. 140 pp. Cloth \$1.60. In this study the author critically examines the two antithetical schools of thought in education which influence the organization of the elementary school curriculum. She undertakes to clarify some of the points at issue between the curriculum focused upon organized subject matter and the curriculum primarily concerned with aspects of child living.

---

BUREAU OF PUBLICATIONS  
Teachers College, Columbia University  
New York City

## REPRINTS

FROM

THE ELEMENTARY  
ENGLISH REVIEW

## Contemporary Poetry for Children

By Walter Barnes

Sound sense and brilliant critical insight applied to contemporary writers of children's verse.

50 cents a copy

★ ★ ★

## A Course of Study in Creative Writing

By C. C. Certain

Practical suggestions for developing in children the ability to enjoy literature, and to write creatively.

35 cents a copy

★ ★ ★

## Latin American Countries in Children's Literature

By Marita Hogan and Margaret Yeschko

An annotated bibliography on a subject of timely interest.

5 cents a copy

★ ★ ★

Please enclose stamps, cash, or check with your order.

★ ★ ★

The Elementary English Review  
Box 67, N. End Sta. Detroit, Mich.

## *Efficiency Is Not Enough*

But life based on mere efficiency is in danger of becoming a very debased and even a devilish affair. Knowledge alone, whether it be academic or technical, has never yet prevented mankind from practising the most diabolical cruelties when the spirit has been so inclined. Very frequently in recent years the criticism has been levelled against science that it has served the purpose of those who produce weapons of destruction. It can be set off against that criticism that science has been the means of saving human life and enriching its leisure, whilst providing in greater profusion and variety the necessities of life.

But thus to strike a balance is not a sufficient answer. The adverse side of the balance, when it exists at all, is too terrible to be permitted, and those who impart knowledge cannot shirk all responsibility for the manner of its subsequent use.

Teachers of all grades, therefore, should endeavor to instil a sense of respect for the rights of each while striving for the benefit of all. Good citizenship makes its claims upon us all, and all have their duties to the State . . .

Thus there is need for teachers, not through the formality of a class subject, but by the creation of an outlook, to send out their pupils with a high sense of citizenship.

From the Presidential Address delivered by Mr. S. H. Moorfield, at the Annual Conference of the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions (England), May 12, 1940. Reprinted through the courtesy of Mr. Evan Williams, Editor, *School Government Chronicle and Education Review*, London, (Vol. CXXXII, No. 3,178, May 1940).